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First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements

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Seniority

The railway executives will meet the President this afternoon and deliver to him personally the different opinions which have developed among them. It is to be hoped that they will lay the whole situation before him and that a just decision upon all the facts will be reached.

The most important matter, unquestionably, is seniority.

On October 29, 1921, the Railway Labor Board declared in the Ann Arbor Railroad Company case:

"The board further points out for the consideration of employees interested that when such action does result in a strike the organization so acting has forfeited its rights and the rights of its members in and to the provisions and benefits of all contracts theretofore existing and the employees so striking have voluntarily removed themselves from the classes entitled to appeal to this board for relief and protection."

At the time the present strike was called the chairman of the Labor Board made the following public statement:

"Upon one question the striking employees should not be deceived. Their leader has said that the strikers are no longer employees of the railways, and they have thus automatically abandoned all the rights they possessed under their agreements and under the decisions of the board, including their seniority. This is not the board's action. It is their own.

"Many carriers are giving their former employees the opportunity to re-enter the service within a limited time. It must be understood now that men who remained in the service and those who are now entering it will have rights of seniority that the board could not ignore."

Immediately following the walkout the railroads, with the approval of the Railroad Labor Board, promised members of the shop crafts remaining on duty and new men entering the service priority, the fullest protection and permanency of employment.

The men who kept the transportation system moving were acting on behalf of the public. They received definite pledges which should be kept. It is difficult to see how men who voluntarily gave up their positions can now ask to have them back at the expense of those who filled the vacancies which they created.

If these pledges are not kept much more is involved than a breach of faith with individuals. It will mean the deterioration of railroad organizations. It will mean a lessened faith in future promises. Every foreman who tried to hold his men in line will lose prestige if he cannot make good on assurances which he gave, and will in turn lose respect for the superior who told him that he was safe in making these promises. If these strikers find they can walk out for six weeks or more and come back without having their record affected it will remove the incentive for continuous service. It will establish the precedent that there is no penalty for a strike based on a refusal to accept a decision of the Labor Board in an arbitration which goes against them.

To the railroad worker the matter of seniority is of great importance. It means the first opportunity for a more desirable job and a preference when the force is being cut down.

While it is easy to see why the railroads felt they had no moral right to waive these privileges on be[illegible] of the loyal workers and new men, it is not easy to see how the Labor Board could hand down a decision against them.

The Tribune desires peace now, but it does not desire a peace that will mean war in the future. It does not desire peace at the expense of principle.

Pensions fall in a different class. There are many systems. On some of the larger roads pensions are paid without regard to continuity of service. No question of principle prevents a compromise upon this point.

These are the views which The Tribune has long held and now holds.

It is to be hoped and expected that any settlement which will be reached will fully protect the rights of the men who are keeping the railroads running to-day for the benefit of the public.

More Pseudo Protection

The farm bloc's losing fight for a duty on hides followed its winning fight for higher duties on sugar. The Smoot rate of 2.3 cents a pound on raw sugar is an increase of three-tenths of a cent over the Fordney bill rate, and nobody has heretofore accused Mr. Fordney of undue moderation in constructing a sugar schedule.

Mr. Smoot's idea is much the same as that of Mr. Gooding and Mr. Capper. It is to give a limited domestic product excess protection, regardless of the effect of that protection in destroying a fair equation between domestic production and consumption.

Continental United States produces about 2,000,000,000 pounds of sugar a year and consumes more than 8,000,000,000 pounds. This ratio has remained pretty constant for years, and there seems to be no prospect that the domestic sugar crop will ever come within long range of supplying the country's needs. The sugar duties are, therefore, more protective in form than they are in essence. They do not operate to foster the growth of a local industry to the point at which it will not only satisfy home wants but will have a balance for export.

Sugar being a commodity of universal use, the duty on imports is, in fact, more in the nature of a revenue than of a protective tax. This was recognized by the framers of the McKinley act, which put sugar on the free list and offered a bounty to the domestic producers.

In the Wilson-Gorman act, which succeeded the McKinley act, a revenue duty was reimposed, although the Democratic leaders in the House, somewhat illogically, made a fight for free sugar without a bounty.

A duty as high as 2.3 cents a pound will bring a good deal of money into the Treasury, because heavy sugar importations must continue. Yet it will hardly increase domestic production. It will put an added burden on every household without any compensating benefit to the country as a whole. The Smoot rate might be defended by tariff-for-revenue-only advocates, in spite of the fact that it is much higher than the Underwood rate. It may also appeal to the new Chinese wall school of protectionists, because it marks a new ascent in sugar schedule rates. But it is repugnant to those who believe that a protective tariff should build as well as tax and should try to strike a balance fair to all domestic groups and interests.

Our Claims Against Germany

The agreement signed on Thursday in Berlin at last provides for the settlement of American claims against Germany. A commission is to be appointed, consisting of one American and one German representative, and of a referee, who, by the special request of the German government, is to be an American.

Although the nature of the circumstances warranted the appointment of an all-American commission—the Lusitania claims being among those to be considered—the appointment of a mixed commission is in accordance with international practice. There is every assurance that the American claims will receive a sympathetic hearing.

The new agreement provides only for the settlement of American claims. As this must, according to the Treaty of Berlin, precede the final liquidation of the Alien Property Custodian's affairs, it also presages the ultimate disposal of German claims against our government. The Treaty of Berlin reads that German property taken over by the American government "shall be retained by the United States of America . . . until such time as the Imperial German government . . . or successors shall have made suitable provision for the satisfaction of all claims . . . of all persons, wheresoever domiciled, who owe permanent allegiance to the United States of America and who have suffered through acts of the Imperial German government or its agents. . . ."

In most of the talk about the Alien Property Custodian's holdings undue stress has been laid upon the poor Germans and their claims. Too little attention has been given to the priority of American claims. This priority is now assured, and when our accounts have been closed and settlements which should have been made years ago are completed it will be time to consider the "outrages" which the Germans allege they have suffered at the hands of the American government.

Mr. Enright Confesses

Commissioner Enright, in restoring the ten-squad police system, announces that the crime wave, which he once said never existed, has passed. He admits abolishing the system in order to check crime, although he still stoutly insists that it was not at all necessary to abolish it, inasmuch as there was no crime to check.

The Commissioner's action is significant in one respect. It is a confession that he reads the newspapers and pays some heed to their advice. He says: "The suspension of this efficient system was occasioned by 'crime wave propaganda' prepared and broadcast by a concert of action among several newspapers, in a deliberate and sustained attack upon this department and its responsible officers."

This "deliberate and sustained" attack consisted in the printing of the crime statistics, with occasional first-page stories of particularly bold and glaring offenses. Mr. Enright said at the time that he paid no attention to these stories and utterly disregarded the editorials printed concerning them.

It now appears that he was at least moved to increase police vigilance because of them. If he will continue from time to time to glance at the newspapers and note crime conditions he may again rearrange the force for the better protection of the public. There is hope for him as long as he is guided by the newspapers, as he now confesses he is.

Censors, Ideal and Real

Of course the publishers want a censor. The Tribune wants a censor. Everybody wants a censor. It is the ideal way to purify minds and morals and save the fir trees and otherwise improve the universe. But, alas! look at the way censorship always works out. It works out in war time in bureaucratic dumb-heads and in peace time—in Mr. John S. Sumner!

Everybody wants a censor, but nobody wants the kind of man that a censor always seems to be—or the kind of man that a censor becomes, at any rate, no matter how sensible and open-minded he may have been at the start. Mr. Sumner was a perfectly efficient young man, doing an excellent job, we have no doubt. There is a job to be done in keeping out downright, unmistakable filth, real garbage. It is like a street cleaner's job, and it is just as important to the health of the community. But it is not a thrilling job. There is no excitement about it. The character of such garbage is unmistakable. It reeks to heaven. All one needs is a shovel and an ashcan—backed up by the routine processes of the courts—to take care of it.

So we have Mr. Sumner as he is to-day, as the job of censorship has made him. "Filth orgy," "dollar publishers," "dirt dishers," "vociferous squawk about freedom of expression," are his regular mode of speech. This would-be judge, who should be a cool, clear-headed and thoroughly human citizen, himself squawks and scratches like an excited hen. We are not disposed to blame Mr. Sumner. Better men than he have lost their perspective in the same fashion. To design, apply and maintain blinders upon all one's fellow citizens is apparently a job beyond human capacity. That squawk (as Mr. Sumner would doubtless call it) in the Constitution of the United States about freedom of speech is apparently based on a very thorough knowledge of human nature as well as of governmental theory.

Celluloid Glamour

If we had a religion or a gold brick or a new contraption of any kind to put over upon a waiting world the first preparatory step we would take would be to tie Mr. Harry Leon Wilson in a large and carefully weighted sack and drop him into the Pacific Ocean at one of those spots where it is eight miles deep. Perhaps we exaggerate the might of "Merton of the Movies," but we don't think so. The acid of that most agreeable volume did more to eat away the glamour from the films than all the Fatty Arbuckles in the business.

There is really no reason why a film star should not have a double. Napoleon was a practical man, and he would surely have had a double for the danger spots if he could have managed it. So would any sensible man who conceived his own value to the universe to be considerable. But reason has nothing to do with glamour, as Merton so clearly exhibited. Who that has read can ever forget Merton's passionate sorrow when he discovered that "the Montague girl" was actually doing the rough tank work of his idolized heroine! He should have been glad that she was not risking her precious, swanlike neck in a hurricane. He was heartbroken and disgusted instead.

Usually the double is a man, as the tragic death of a beskirted movie actor in Columbus Avenue brought to light upon the front pages. Not even the ingenious imagination of Mr. Will H. Hays can make such doings romantic. No; the day has arrived when the motion picture must live or die on its merits as an entertainment, its heroes, heroines and doubles judged like other folk for their ability on their jobs, and the less known of their non-celluloid existences the better.

Ratifying Naval Limitation

Ratification by King George of the naval limitation agreements reached at Washington completes the formalities for the British Empire. The Japanese government has expressed itself ready to put the treaty into execution as soon as it has been finally accepted by the United States and Great Britain, so that there remains only the question of French and Italian approval. Washington, it is reported, is not anxious to carry out the terms of the treaty until all five nations have ratified it, but is willing to consider the suggestion from Japan that in so far as the 5—5—3 ratio is concerned it is unnecessary for the three principal nations concerned to wait for France and Italy.

It is, of course, regrettable that all the European nations concerned have not yet ratified the Washington treaties. The United States, after its own experience with the Versailles treaty, is not, however, in a position to complain about this delay. But so little does French and Italian participation affect the major issues involved that it is questionable whether the delay in ratification in Paris and Rome should hold up the plans of Great Britain, the United States and Japan for adopting the 5—5—3 ratio.

The naval agreement, as a matter of fact, was primarily an affair among the three great naval powers. The participation of France and Italy was invited as an act of courtesy. In order to achieve the desired results it was necessary to limit the three enormous rival navies. After the principle has been accepted by these nations it will not be difficult to induce others to follow suit.

The Japanese are reported to have suggested making a three-power agreement if the present five-power treaty finally fails of ratification by all the European powers. Like ourselves and like the British, the Japanese are looking forward to the economies which will be possible when the principle of limitation has been put into effect.

The fact that Japan has made such a proposal may be taken as a token of the sincerity of Japan's desire that the work of the Washington conference may be turned to profit as soon as possible.

More Truth Than Poetry

By James J. Montague

Request Denied

The English sparrow, we are told
By scientists of note,
Has always had a heart of gold
Beneath his husky throat.
And though he wakes us at the dawn
With hideous chirps and chants,
He always bravely carries on
When bugs attack our plants.

We writing persons are implored
To say a kindly word
And bear a friendly feeling toward
This somewhat pesky bird,
Who, though he substitutes for song
A harsh and strident cluck,
With busy bill works all day long
To save our garden truck.

Perhaps the scientists are right
In all that they contend;
Perhaps this impish, feathered sprite
Has really been our friend;
Perhaps he toils from sun to sun
Base insects to pursue,
And for the good that he has done
Has never had his due.

But, notwithstanding, he's endowed
With such a blatant air,
He fights so much and shrieks so loud
While hopping here and there,
And is so like some folks we know,
That no hard-labored lays
Of ours are ever going to flow
In pæans of his praise.

The Test

We'll never believe that Germany is sincere about wanting to pay till she cuts off the allowance of the Hohenzollern boys.

Underpaid

If Mr. Harding had known he was being elected a referee he would have asked for more salary in advance.

Practically Immortal

Lenine is the real die-hard.

(Copyright by James J. Montague)

The Underdog

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: With all the plans which have been put forth to settle the strikes there is one which, as far as I know, hasn't been mentioned. When Woodrow Wilson took Congress by the back of the neck and forced the passage of the Adamson law labor unions were given practical control of this country. Is there any reason why Congress should not be asked to repeal that law?

I have always been in sympathy with the "underdog," and am yet, but now the underdog is the public, and the "public be damned" theory has gone a little too far. It is time that same public resisted with all its force.

ONE OF THE PUBLIC.

New York, Aug. 10, 1922.

The Tower

MUTINY

ONE life to live in! One brief span of years
In which to do the things I want to do;
To find what is essential, what is true;
To rise triumphantly to hope through fears
That blind and choke; to weep and dry my tears,
Because my heart loves joy and laughter, too—
So small a time is spared me to subdue
The protest that death causes as it nears.

I am rebellious at a fate that makes
Its creatures love and hate and strive and yearn
And lets them struggle blindly with mistakes,
Yet gives so little time in which to learn—
So little time to play for such great stakes;
So brief a time to let the bright flame burn.

ADELE DE LEEUW.

Current activity by gunmen and bandits indicates that the sensitive and patriotic crooks of New York have taken to heart Commissioner Enright's statement that there is more crime in Europe than here.

Or it may merely mean that the threat of a rail tie-up has called the originators of the crime epidemic back from their well-earned vacations.

Or—we can keep on offering alternatives indefinitely—it may be that the recent performances by soused policemen have convinced the criminals that the cops are trying to steal their stuff.

Still, things might be worse. Mr. Enright has not yet been convinced that the situation warrants a proclamation declaring the crime wave non-existent.

THE DECADENCE OF THE DRAMA

(From the Port Jervis Tri-States Union)

Sterling's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was in our midst on Friday, and furnished an extreme contrast to the glowing description of its attractions as set forth in the modest (?) little pamphlets of recent distribution. Various opinions were heard afterward that ranged from extreme indignation to laughter. It was advertised as being "superior in every way to any tent organization that has ever visited your city," but that was not saying much, as it was the only tent show we have ever entertained, and we will have to "be shown" before there is another. As an example of trying to see how much money could be squeezed out of a town in return for the least possible amount of entertainment—it cannot be surpassed. We are not critical, nor do we expect too much, but our private opinion of the worth of this particular performance cannot be sent through the mail. If the citizens of this town couldn't beat this performance on twenty-four hours' notice, we are willing to eat our editorial shirt, even down to the "Union Made" label. The "Free Outside Exhibition" consisted of two ponies and a lot of chatter. The performance consisted of a lot of chatter without the ponies. The "Pack of Siberian Bloodhounds" turned out to be one unwilling pup that had to be dragged onto his scene. 'Twas a grand night, folks, but the next show will find us all catfishing. We won't be disappointed then if we don't catch anything.

Europe, people continues to shriek, is standing on the brink of disaster. After some six years in this position it does seem as though she might now be able to sit down and swing her legs gayly over the chasm.

Maybe His Was a Cleanly Soul

Sir: Realizing that you are the victim of many allusions to freakish headlines, I have frequently restrained myself. But to-day that sterling organ of the Fourth Estate, none other than our own Tribune, announces that one despondent human "Shoots Self in Bathroom."

Well do I know that the body is the tenement of the soul, but that so lovely and ethereal a thing as the soul should require so material and superfluous an institution as a bathroom is beyond my groping faculty of comprehension.

H. J. L.

Says Mr. Hays: "It was indeed gratifying to find in every department the most enthusiastic support for some of the newer efforts of the association, such as the plans to make certain that all pictures sent abroad correctly portray American ideals and opportunities, and the consequent inevitable betterment of international relationships; and the plans which are developing with the educators of the country to make classroom pictures which are pedagogically, scientifically and psychologically sound."

From which one may gather that months of association with the silent drama have had no debilitating effect on the lung power of its czar.

TRIOLET

When poets have no more to say,
Three periods will do the trick.
Imagination has its way
When poets have no more to say.
It is a common ruse to-day,
And one that makes me very sick . . .
When poets have no more to say,
Three periods will do the trick. . . .

MERC.

Daily we become more certain that the housing situation is improving. Renting agents are talking this year less like Prussian field marshals and more like summer resort folders.

All the long summer through,
In the quiet side streets of the city,
Dangle the "Flat to Let" signs,
The forget-me-nots of the landlords.

When our own landlord takes off his hat once more on entering our abode and concedes of his own accord that some of the rooms need redecorating, then we'll know it's safe to tell him all the things we've been filing away for future use during the last four years.

It is none other than that eminent critic, Mr. Sumner, who insists that the present-day author is trying to see how much filth he can compress into one volume.

Enter, the literary Back to the Soil movement.

F. P. V.

WE STILL CAN'T SEE ANYTHING THE MATTER WITH

Books

By Percy Hammond

A wide reading of the printed remarks of which Mr. Sumner, the censor, and his office are the topics, discovers no kindly word for that assiduous evangel in his endeavors to police the publications of the day.

Surely some one must like the man and approve of his demonstrations. So distant an absence from friendship is unbelievable. Mr. Sumner's angry adversaries stuff his throat with unsavory appellations, and, like the hot Norfolk in the play, do defy him and spit at him and call him a slanderous miscreant and a villain.

There is almost as much printed indignation against Mr. Sumner's pious rapine of Thomas Seltzer's chaste library as there is against the voracious coal miners and maintenance men. Many of our deepest critical thinkers abandon their important adventures among masterpieces not, as you might think, to take charge of the tariff, the reparations, boot-legging or the bonus, but to heap ignominies upon poor Sumner for arresting as loose and wanton some volumes that are said to be merely male and female.

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Yet Mr. Sumner persists with an amiable dauntlessness to filter the book shelves of their impurities, smiling, a little sadly perhaps, as his scolding censors blow and crack their cheeks in windy annoyance. He does not warn prospective victims of their danger from the more abandoned of the belles-lettres; he puts the hazard safely away from them. In "Casanova's Home Coming" for instance, Mr. Sumner sees that old men are imperiled by the account of a gray knave's successful though senile fondlings, and he removes the obstruction. The roguish stockings catalogue of "Women in Love" he regards as conducive to frailty, and many persons are therefore rescued from its bad influences when he denies it circulation. What mischiefs Mr. Sumner discerned in "A Young Girl's Diary" this correspondent does not know, having had no time to read it. It seems incredible that minutes so fragrantly entitled as "A Young Girl's Diary" could be anything but congenial to pretty thoughts. But the annals probably report some suspicious movements of a young girl who is not quite nice. At any rate, Mr. Sumner has beckoned this diary to the oubliette, and if while there it isn't doing us any good it isn't doing us any harm.

• • •

As a bookworm of the wholesome type I shouldn't be surprised if Mr. Sumner did not deserve a more sympathetic consideration. He is, I am told, an agreeable fellow, distinguished by a charm that is ingratiating though pious. His demeanor at the criminal assizes the other day, when he arraigned the offending literature as unclean, is whispered to have been praiseworthy. He had neither halo nor hair shirt, and he brandished no weapons of inquisition. He did not tiptoe smugly, nor wear the silky side-whiskerage traditionally emblematic of good men. Those critics who were present, indignantly, found Mr. Sumner quite possible as a person, though no good as a book lover. And still they permit their admiration for him as a likable human being to be silenced by their prejudice against him as an antagonist of printed unrefinements!

• • •

After all Mr. Sumner is but one of the more animated atoms in a world replete with censors, so why should he be impinged upon so many acrimonies? The ruthless boys who seek to abolish him by their sour objections are similarly prohibitionist, eager to amend or eradicate the things which discommode them. If all of us had our way there would be nothing. Mr. Sumner happens merely to be able to make his suggestions audible from a more efficacious Sinai and to emit the dismal tidings of his disapprobation with deeper frowns and more authority, so he is hissed at. "Down with him!" our favorite outcry against everything including Sumner.

• • •

I admit a little astonishment, however, as I read in The Tribune the other day that the censored Mathilde had grown herself censorious. Leaving these shores for foreign neighborhoods not long ago, she pleaded to let alone, contending that she had a right to live her own life, in her own way, shyly and inconspicuously, and that it was no affair of an interfering public how or with whom she lived. Yet Mathilde, arriving in Paris, once became bossy of the ways of others. Like the lady who attended the Folies and was amazed to find a leg show, the unknowing Mathilde wandered innocently into a night resort in Montmartre and was abashed upon discovering it to be indecorous. When upon she called for the police, and demanded that the resort be suppressed as risque, much to the annoyance and discomfort of the tourists who at the time, were living their own lives therein. Thus the passion for setting things exists in many breasts from those of the Mathildes to those of the Sumners, an inclusion which one ventures to suspect, is reasonably extensive. I am suddenly reminded that Mathilde's startled hostility to the impropriettes of the Rue Pigalle may be hereditary. Not for the moment that her forebears founded the Cormick Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) and the University of Chicago (Baptist), but because Mr. Cormick, one of her delightful parents, helped me to the better and the literary life several years ago by borrowing my copy of Mr. Hunter's naughty "Painted Veils," and by no means prevented it for ever and ever from making me a bad man.

What Readers Are Thinking

Germany's Debt to France

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: It should be remembered, when Germany wails and reiterates her inability to pay in part her debt to France, suffering from her long planned onslaught, that the plundered and destroyed cities of France and Belgium had to pay the tribute without delay which Germany in temporary triumph levied upon them.

What wonder that the world, long since wise to the tricks of the Teuton, some of them of incredible clumsiness, refuses to believe in the honesty of her cries of poverty and inability to pay for her crimes against civilization? Or, after noting the increase of 17,394,400,000 marks in German paper circulation during the three weeks ended July 7, that the world refuses to believe that the reduced reparations payments are responsible for the enormous currency deflation or to credit the statement that Germany is on the brink of ruin and collapse because she has to find a cash payment of £2,500,000 per month?

It seems almost incredible that such statements can be seriously put forward, and almost ludicrous that the Germans expect them to have force or to be believed. Germany with a population of 65,000,000 (more than double that of France, remember), with factories and shipyards in full swing and working at high pressure, and with various other industries whose output is restricted only by the shortage of labor, should really adopt a more dignified attitude before the world.

Reparation payments owing by Germany to France (assuming that no new moratorium is accorded and that she pays the whole amount in cash) are 52 per cent of 2,000,000,000 gold marks per annum. That is 1,560,000,000 marks. This (according to M. Juvenal, of the French Senate) would leave an annual deficit to be met by France of 97,000,000 gold marks, or about 800,000,000 francs at the present value of the franc. In other words, as he says, "After all the priorities have been exhausted (cost of armies of occupation, Belgian priorities and priority for private debts, etc.) the allies of France will first, if Germany fulfills her engagements scrupulously, take for themselves 48 per cent of the money paid (under the agreements of December, 1919), then place their hands on the remaining 52 per cent in virtue of the debts owing to them by France, and finally will demand a further 300,000,000 francs a year, leaving her to find the money to pay for the reconstruction of the devastated area, pensions and the whole cost of the carrying on of the war, other than the amount she borrowed from the Allies."

GEORGE WHARTON EDWARDS.

New York, Aug. 10, 1922.

The Finder's Reward

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Mary Lodge, in her letter "The Finder's Reward," asks what D. P. would become grateful [illegible] the degree of 25 cents if a little honest to the degree of $200, restore to him a package containing that amount. The implication in this question is that D. P. should be grateful to the degree of the whole amount, and therefore he should give the little girl the $200. But if Mary Lodge considers this too much, just how much would she give—a 10 per cent fee? D. P. suggests?

True, retrieving a man's lost pocketbook comes under the category of good manners. But where does the line between good manners and honesty? How great must be the value of the lost article or how long a time must elapse between the finding and the returning to make this latter action a matter for monetary reward? And is not honesty good manners in the last analysis?

If honesty is the foundation of character, certainly it should be rewarded as a matter of course, without any financial expression of thanks or gratitude. This may [illegible] philosophy, but it has the [illegible] logic back of it.

G. K. SEELEY.

New York, Aug. 10, 1922.